USS Port Royal Sailors volunteer during liberty in Hong Kong

Lt. j.g. Sarah A. O'Hare
USS Port Royal Public Affairs

When USS Port Royal (CG 73) recently arrived in Hong Kong for a port visit, some of the ship's Sailors provided humanitarian assistance to the only Ronald McDonald House located in Asia.

Led by Port Royal's chaplain, Lt. Bob J. Vance, 21 of the guided missile cruiser's Sailors donated more than 100 hours to refurbish the charitable organization's office area.

"I was really happy with the turnout," Vance said. "It's wonderful that so many Sailors are willing to donate their liberty in a foreign port to contribute to a worthy cause."

Upon arrival, project coordinator Julie Ong welcomed the Port Royal group and expressed her appreciation for their support. Fully supplied with hygiene and first-aid products, the Sailors distributed these materials to the 12 families currently occupying the home. The Sailors then wiped down walls, cleaned windows, shampooed carpets and organized a storage room. Once the work was finished,

Sailors joined the families for a lunch consisting of none other than McDonald's hamburgers and french fries.

Personnelman 3rd Class Lauren A. Hodlik said despite the long day, helping out those in need was a more than adequate reward.
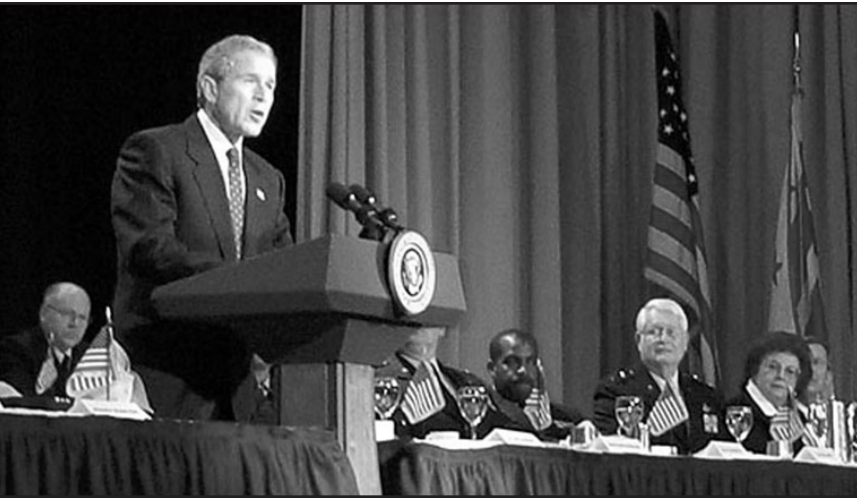
"It was all manual labor and, I admit I was pretty exhausted by the time we finished," she said. "What we were able to accomplish, however, significantly improved the quality of life for the families living here. That alone made the effort worth it."

The primary mission of The Ronald McDonald House is to provide a home for the families of sick children near the hospital where their child is being treated.

The Ronald McDonald House in Hong Kong is funded by the Ronald McDonald Corporation and is capable of sheltering up to 28 families. For a $10 fee, families receive shelter and services comparable to those offered by a small hotel.

Port Royal is deployed as part of the John C. Stennis Battle Group in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Bush pledges pay raise, more money for defense in 2003 budget

Linda D. Kozaryn photo

President Bush addresses members of the Reserve Officers Association at their mid-winter conference in Washington.

Linda D. Kozaryn
American Forces Press Service

The United States "will not cut corners" when it comes to national defense, President Bush told about 1,500 members of the Reserve Officers Association here today.

"The tools of modern warfare are effective. They are expensive and in order to win this war against terror, they are essential," he said. "Whatever it takes, whatever it costs, this patient, this resolved nation will win the first war of the 21st century."

The president said the military takes top priority in the 2003 budget he'll present to Congress next week. It includes more than $48 billion

in new defense spending, and another pay raise for the military.

"This will be the largest increase in defense spending in 20 years," Bush said. It will be used to invest in more precision weapons, in missile defenses, in unmanned vehicles, in high-tech equipment for soldiers on the ground

The nation asks much of its men and women in uniform and in return, they deserve every resource, every weapon needed to achieve a full and final victory, the president said.

"Today, the Guard and Reserve are fighting a two-front war, one in Central Asia and one here at home," Bush told the military crowd. "The Air Force alone has flown 3,000 sorties over Afghanistan, and more than 800 sorties to protect American cities."

Afghanistan's Taliban "is now out of business," he said. "We've smoked members of Al

Qaeda out of their caves. We've destroyed their bunkers and the global network of terrorists has seen the first glimpse of their fate."

The United States has also shipped food and medicine to the people of Afghanistan. U.S. officials have helped them organize a new government representing all the people. These gains are a tribute to America's military, the president said.

"There was no doubt in my mind that when I unleashed our great military, that our men and women would perform bravely. They have not let us down," he said.

The military has been relentless in its pursuit of the terrorists, he said. "No matter how long it takes, no matter where we have to look, our United States military will patiently and surely hunt down the murderers and killers and terrorists and bring them one by one to jus-

tice."

The war began in Afghanistan, but it is not going to end there, he said. The United States still faces "a shadowy enemy" and "danger and sacrifices lie ahead," he noted.

"We will not tire until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, has been stopped and has been defeated," he said. "The terrorists, the evil ones who targeted America, are learning something. They picked the wrong enemy."

The Reserve Officers Association presented its Minuteman of the Year 2002 award to the president. The award recognizes those who personify the ideals of the Minuteman, courage, love of country and selfless service. Bush was cited for providing steadfast leadership during a time of crisis and rallying the nation to defend freedom and democracy wherever they are threatened.

COMSUBPAC announces 2001 Battle "E" recipients

JO2 Cori Rhea
COMSUBPAC Public Affairs

Winners of the 2001 Battle Efficiency "E" award for the Submarine Forces, Pacific have recently been named. USS Buffalo (SSN 715) (Commander Submarine Squadron One), USS Key West (SSN 722) (Commander Submarine Squadron Three), and USS Santa Fe (SSN 763) (Commander Submarine Squadron Seven), all attack submarines based out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, have been awarded Battle "E" for their respective squadrons by Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC).

The purpose of the Battle "E" award is to recognize commands which were evaluated during the past year that have attained the highest overall or departmental readiness to carry out their wartime tasks.

"The competition for battle efficiency awards was extremely tough," said Rear Adm. John B. Padgett III, Commander Submarine Forces Pacific Fleet.

"Each crew member of an award winner can be justifiably proud of their contribution to improve Pacific submarine force readiness."

U.S. Navy photo

USS Key West (SSN 722) of Commander Submarine Squadron One was selected as a winner of a 2001 Battle Efficiency "E" award.

Bravo Zulu

Naval Medical Clinic Pearl Harbor
Senior Sailor of the Year
HM1 Manuel P. Balbas

Junior Sailor of the Year
HM2 Francesca M. Guerra

Bluejacket of the Year
HM3 Ronald L. Smallwood

Navy Region Hawaii
Senior Sailor of the Quarter
CTR1 Bryon L. Grammer
NAVSECGRUACT Kunia

Junior Sailor of the Quarter
CTA2 Crenshella V. Randolph
CINCPACFLT

Bluejacket of the Quarter
CTA3 George A. Whittaker
NAVSECGRUACT Kunia

COMSUBPAC
Junior Officers of the Year
Lt. Brian Blair
USS Charlotte (SSN 766)
Lt. Jacob Foret
USS Honolulu (SSN 718)
Lt. Daniel Breton
USS Parche (SSN 683)
Lt. j.g. Kenneth Monfore III
USS Santa Fe (SSN 763)
Lt. Robert Berg
USS Bremerton (SSN 698)
Lt. Jason Geddes
USS HM Jackson (SSBN 730)(G)
Lt.j.g. Christopher Marks
USS Alabama (SSBN 731)(B)

NCM
BMC (SEAL) Peter Sagasti

NAM
MMC(SS) Marvin Miller
HM1(SEAL) Kenneth Bulahan
HM2(DSW/SW/PJ/FMF) Troy Wold
QM1 Jared Duell
DC2(DSW) Willy Risco
ET2(SW) Michael Byrd
IS2(SEAL) Mark Cardillo

Qualified in Submarines
SM2(DSW) Nicholas Holmes

GCM
BMCS(DSW/MDV) Pascal Balesi
IT1(SEAL/SW) Derek Romsland
SM1(SEAL) Thomas Polsgrove
IT2(SW) Willie Arnold
HT2 Roy Bair
DC2(DSW) Nicholas Holmes
ET3 Michael Amann
ET3 Jereme Blackburn
ET3 Justin Bruce
ET3 Sara Henry
ET3 Kenneth Johnson
ET3 Dallas Smith

DoD uses more 'tools' to shape civilian work force

Army Sgt. 1st Class
Kathleen T. Rhem
American Forces Press Service

The Department of Defense is getting "more tools in its toolkit" to properly shape an aging civilian work force, a senior pesonnel official said.

Roughly 18,000 employees retired in 2001, and officials estimate 20,000 will take the plunge this year, said Jack Schrader, deputy assistant secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy.

Schrader said as many as 24,000 people per year may retire by 2007. Retirements account for roughly half of the personnel attrition DoD deals with in a given year.

"We need to try to shape those losses to make sure that critical employees stay around long enough to transition the knowledge that they have to newer employees that are coming up through the ranks," Schrader said.

He said it's also critical that the department hire the right people with the right skills into the right jobs. "The focus needs to be on

how to manage the attrition and then managing the filling of those vacancies, to make sure we don't do it in a nonfocused way," Schrader said.

To do this, DoD is employing several strategies to boost recruitment.

Statutory changes in recent years allow retired military members to take civil service jobs without having their federal civilian salary being offset for their military retirement pay. Schrader said officials hope this will make civil service a more attractive option for military retirees.

"Retired military are at an age where they have many productive years ahead of them," he said. "They have skills and are trained in a lot of our mission-critical areas."

Civil service human-resource managers have typically relied on a "military model" for recruitment. Schrader said this meant hiring people for entry-level jobs and then "growing" them into higher-level positions within their departments. DoD is now looking to attract individuals in middle- or upper-level private

sector jobs.

"Where people have skills that perhaps aren't critical skills any longer, we're putting resources toward training and retraining them into the skill areas we need," he said.

"A lot of times the skills we need are the same skills the private sector is after also," he said. To be a more competitive recruiter, DoD has added perks new employees can qualify for, Schrader said. These include paying off student loans up to $40,000, paying recruitment bonuses up to 25 percent of the first year's salary, and paying for professional credentials.

Government employment traditionally has been considered more stable than private-sector employment. Schrader said this stability attracts a lot of prospective employees.

He also said many young people are attracted by the prospect of serving their country. "We need to remind people that service to the nation is a good cause," he said. "With recent events, I think that that probably is even more of a selling point."